

MEETING NOTES: City of Philadelphia Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee (SWRAC),
ORGANICS RECYCLING SUBCOMMITTEE

DATE: January 26, 2016

ATTENDEES:

Paul Kohl, PWD
Adam Hendricks, PWD
Phil Bresee, Streets Department/Recycling Office
Mike Giuranna, US EPA Region 3
Tim Bennett, Bennett Composting, Inc.
Laura Cassidy, Philadelphia Prisons System
Maurice Sampson, Niche Recycling
Shante Mason, PWD
Kendall Christiansen, Gaia Strategies
Noah Christiansen, Gaia Strategies
Nic Esposito, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Marc Wilken, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
Fern Gookin, Revolution Recovery

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:15 a.m. Snow and travel related delays pushed meeting back. Introductions were made.

Discussion on national food waste disposer usage from Kendall Christiansen:

- Philadelphia was the first city to adopt a pilot program to study food waste disposers. It included 175 homes in 2 neighborhoods.
- Other than Philadelphia, five cities have conducted disposer pilot projects (Boston, Tacoma, Calgary, Chicago, and Milwaukee).
- Studies have similar results of a diversion rate of approximately 30-50% of total food waste stream in households with disposers.
- Food waste is in four categories – bones/hard wastes, liquids, soft wastes/leftovers, and food in packaging. Of these, food still in packaging is the hardest to get people to separate and put organics in disposers. Typically the whole package with food waste is put in the trash. If intended for organic recycling often not properly separated so that packaging gets to composter.
- Boston, MA is installing disposers in 3,000 units of public housing in the next 3 years. They operate and maintain 12,000 public housing units with additional 12,000 units operated under contract. The City of Boston will start a zero waste planning process in the spring (2016).
- Tacoma, WA has a WWTP that creates Class A bio-solids, with a high amount of local usage (TagGro). They are looking at purchase rebates and installation financing options for the promotion of FWD installation.
- LA is looking to start a pilot in the near future – 200 homes in one neighborhood. LA already has high installation rates (80% of homes have a disposer), so the focus will be more on increased use and upgrading units. The study will also analyze effects on wastewater treatment plant.
- Calgary is in construction on a \$50M composting facility for yard waste, food waste, and bio-solids. Single family (2017) green bin collection curbside. Consultation for multi-residence

organics (green bin or FWD etc). FWD is under consideration, they have a 65 condo unit demonstration scale project.

- NYC has a pilot for curbside food waste pickup (~150k housing units in low density areas – NYC has 3.3 million housing units). They are having truck capacity issues (trucks are not full enough to be efficient) and having trouble finding places to take the wastes. They are struggling to figure out how disposers fit into their overall waste planning. A civic group (the Citizen’s Budget Commission) is publishing a report within the next week looking at costs of truck collection vs. sewer transmission in NYC.
- There are at least 2 additional cost studies, which seem to be similar to the one being done in NYC. The study was done by a Canadian engineering professor out of Western University that Kendall will try to share. The focal areas of study were London Ontario and the region of York both Canadian Cities.
- Clarity on the new Philadelphia Law requiring installation of FWDs was discussed
 - This is for new residential construction only, but all residential construction, single family, to multiunit etc.
 - If one were interested in a heavy legislative hand then the law would need to be modified to include kitchen renovations. Much of our current residential activity is in the renovation market. It was explained to the group that the law was new construction only.
- This led to discussions on overall current regulations and how they are enforced. That is, L&I, Department of Health, etc.
- Maurice made the additional point that matching the disposer specs to the usage is a key to adoption. Gave an example of a Radian House (an 800 unit Penn housing facility) that put in cheaper disposers and now has increased waste disposal and maintenance costs.

Phil Breese provided update on status of organic waste feasibility study:

- Consultant work is underway – completed the first task, which was a situational analysis.
- Next task is to begin on a marketplace assessment, including processors, capacities, and market rates.
- Maurice brought up the point that the consultant should meet with the processors as a group to hear common issues and get a sense of what they see the future (w/o presence of regulators).
- Consultant will come to next month’s meeting to provide more detailed update.

Other meeting notes:

- The Water Research Foundation is looking to petition their board to provide funding for additional research into the fate of food waste in the sewer system.
- The Delaware Valley Green Building Council is having a sustainability symposium in March. Kendall has submitted a panel proposal to discuss disposers further (<http://dvgbc.org/TriStateSS2016>).
- USEPA Region (III) just awarded some small grants (~\$10k) for food waste recycling – to West Chester, Northampton County, and Blair County.

Next month’s meeting is scheduled for February 23 at 9 AM. It will again be held at PWD offices located at 1101 Market Street, but on the 3rd floor this time (Conference room 3A).